



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. 06-045

April 4, 2006

NRC USES RISK INSIGHTS TO REVISE MITIGATING SYSTEMS CATEGORY IN REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has updated its Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) with the introduction of the Mitigating Systems Performance Index (MSPI), which tracks the availability and reliability of systems used to reduce the severity of incidents at a nuclear power plant.

The agency created the ROP six years ago to improve its inspection and enforcement programs for commercial nuclear power plants. At that time, the process included performance indicators for safety system unavailability, but ongoing experience with the ROP revealed the need for further enhancement. The MSPI addresses this need and takes into account plant-specific features.

“The MSPI constitutes a significant enhancement to the ROP’s performance indicators by more fully incorporating understanding of how systems contribute to a plant’s overall safety picture,” said Jim Dyer, Director of the NRC’s Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. “This change will improve our ability to track how well utilities are running their plants.”

The NRC has worked with stakeholders on refining the MSPI since a pilot program in 2002. The development of the new indicator has included multiple public meetings and public comments, as well as input from the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards and other nuclear regulators interested in using similar methods. The NRC and stakeholders have established a risk assessment methodology and have developed software and databases to provide the raw data necessary for evaluating the index. The NRC will issue shortly a Regulatory Issue Summary on implementing the MSPI.

###